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SUBJECT: CNE INVITES EU ELECTORAL OBSERVERS

11. (SBU) On Monday, March 3rd the National Electoral Commission (CNE) formally invited the European Union to observe Angola parliamentary elections currently slated for September 5-6, 2008. In a March 6 conversation with the Ambassador, European Commission Head of Delegation Joao Gabriel Ferreira said that the EU will send a nine-member advance team to Angola in mid-May to sort out details of the observation mission. CNE President Caetano de Sousa also told Ferreira that other groups would be invited to observe; however, he did not specify which groups.

12. (SBU) COMMENT: This long-awaited invitation is a positive indicator that the September elections remain on track. It also appears to have come in time for the EU to mount a comprehensive observation effort. We also expect a team from the Carter Center to visit Angola later this month to test the water and assess whether it will work to observe the elections. END COMMENT  
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